



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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BOARD OF EDUCATION FINALIZES COMMISSIONER HIRE; SEATS NEW MEMBER; SETS PRIORITIES FOR LEGISLATIVE SESSION

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – At its meeting in Frankfort today, the Kentucky Board of Education unanimously ratified a 4-year contract with the state's new Commissioner of Education, Stephen Pruitt. Dr. Pruitt's first official day on the job will be Friday, October 16.

The board meeting started with Frankfort Chief Circuit Court Judge Phillip Shepherd administering the oath of office to the newest member of the Kentucky Board of Education, Sarah Murphy Ford of Owensboro. Governor Beshear appointed Ford to the board to fill the at-large seat vacated by Trevor Bonnstetter, who resigned earlier this year. She will serve the remainder of Bonnstetter's term that ends April 14, 2016.

Also during the meeting, the board set its budget priorities for the department's budget submission to the Governor's Office and the General Assembly.

While board members agreed that funding the Kentucky Teacher's Retirement System (KTRS) will be the main education focus for the upcoming session, the board maintained that it is critical to sustain current SEEK basic per pupil funding. The board budget priorities include:

- **Expand career and technical education and college/career readiness opportunities** – Among other things, this would include support for local area vocational education centers, project-based learning, dual credit and debt service on a \$30 million bond to upgrade career and technical education equipment.
- **Expand preschool eligibility** – Recognizing that early education is critical to a child's success in school, this would increase the number of 4-year olds that could attend state preschool by more than 15,600 students by increasing eligibility of at-risk students from 160 percent to 200 percent of the poverty level.
- **Develop new state assessments** – This includes the design and development of new science and social studies assessments aligned to new standards as required by Senate Bill 1 (2009); an enhanced item pool for English/Language Arts and Math assessments including performance-based and technology enhanced formats; and the administration of online K-PREP assessments.
- **Increase SEEK transportation funding** – Currently the state covers only 59 percent of the costs districts incur transporting students. To meet rising costs and due to no increase in transportation funding since 2007, districts have had to redirect funds which could be used to support instruction. The board agreed to seek funding that would increase state support to the 80 percent level.
- **Support low achieving schools** – Education Recovery Staff assist schools and districts in need of school improvement and turnaround, especially in persistently low-achieving schools.

The capital budget request includes improvements at the Kentucky School for the Blind, Kentucky School for the Deaf and the FFA Center.

Also during today's meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education:

- appointed Kenis Hall to the Kentucky School for the Blind Advisory Board
- tabled a request from the McCracken County Board of Education for a Waiver of Section 9 (1) of 704 KAR 3:285, Programs for the Gifted and Talented
- approved Kentucky Tech System Policies and Procedures
- heard the first reading of [705 KAR 2:140](#), Equalization of Funding for Locally-Operated Area Vocational Centers and Vocational Department
- approved new district facility plans for Barren County, Franklin County, Knox County, Jessamine County, Bowling Green Independent, and Silver Grove Independent
- approved a site for the proposed new elementary school in Perry County
- approved a waiver of 702 KAR 4:050, Section 4 (4)(a), to allow for site approval for the proposed new high school in Martin County
- approved the 2015-16 local district tax rates levied

Additionally, the board received updates on the:

- 2015 Unbridled Learning Assessment and Accountability [results](#)
- Kentucky Core Academic Standards ([KCAS](#)) Challenge
- Kentucky Education [North Star Project](#)
- [2015 audit](#)
- school districts in state assistance ([Caverna Ind.](#), [Fleming Co.](#) and [Robertson Co.](#))
- school districts in state management ([Breathitt Co.](#) and [Menifee Co.](#))

The next regular meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education will be December 9 in Frankfort.

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